

the meridian

THE STUDENT VOICE OF LEHMAN COLLEGE

March, 2017

Bronx, New York

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Cake featuring the book cover. Photo credit: Sydney Boryga.

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the meridian

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Correction for last month's February 2017 issue of the Meridian. In the article "Lehman College's Office of Community Engagement Guides Students to Service," the name of the volunteer pictured, published as Alimata Leila Duedraoge, is incorrect. Her name is Alimata Leila Ouedraogo.

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President Cruz Calls for Equity in Higher Ed at D.C. Hearing

By Juan B. García



After the hearing, at Congressman Espallat's office. From left to right, Marcial Davis, Gabir Kaid, Rinor Gjirkokaj, Michael Ackers, Jamil Gafur, New York's 13th Congressional District Representative Adriano Espallat, Lehman President Dr. José Luis Cruz, Yessica Estrella, Amna Azeem, Donald Dwyer, and David Charcape.

On Feb. 7 in Washington D.C., Lehman President Dr. José Luis Cruz testified before the U.S. House of Representatives Committee on Education and the Workforce in a hearing entitled “Challenges and Opportunities in Higher Education.”

The hearing was the first that the House through this committee on the topic. Members of Congress are developing an outline of what they hope will be the new law governing higher education, called The Higher Education Act, and President Cruz has been in ongoing conversation with them. At stake is the American system of higher education, which

is providing opportunities for more individuals than ever before, but also facing challenges, said Chairwoman Virginia Foxx, who led the hearing.

Key among them is deepening inequality. “Right now, our system is far too inequitable. Low-income students today enroll in college at rates lower than high-income students did in the mid-1970s,” said Cruz, “and are far more likely to enroll in institutions that graduate few of their students and create disproportionate debt.”

In his testimony, Cruz said that 50 percent of Lehman undergraduates

have a household income of \$30,000 or less, that 80 percent are students of color, and that 41 percent speak a language other than English at home. In contrast, he added that, in a 2017 study sponsored by The Equality of Opportunity Project, Lehman ranked No. 4 in the nation for its role in propelling large numbers of students from the bottom 40 percent to the top 40 percent.

Lehman student leaders and mentors attended the hearing to support Cruz and watched the panel discussion in a separate room by TV.

“I think everybody at Lehman would

agree that we all share his ideas and his beliefs and what [President Cruz] wants to achieve,” said Yessica Estrella, Leadership Mentor from the Student Government Association (SGA). “Because if you are a Lehman student or somebody from the Bronx, or a person of low-income background, or a person of color, what he spoke about resonates with you.”

“If you are a Lehman student or somebody from The Bronx, or a person of low-income background, or a person of color, what he spoke about resonates with you.”

- Yessica Estrella, a Leadership Mentor from the Student Government Association

According to Cruz, Lehman College is an institution taking every opportunity available to build an equity-focused higher education system. This is accomplished through three practices: expanding access to a more diverse student body through alternate and well-coordinated pathways to increase student success, improving

graduation rates while reducing the time it takes students to earn a degree or certificate, and establishing public-private partnerships in leading-edge workforce development areas.

He recommended that a number of equity-driven policies and practices be implemented nationwide, including publishing good, actionable data to allow students to make informed enrollment decisions, increasing Pell Grant funding and renewing state investments. Cruz looks forward to the possibility of being invited back to press further for equity on higher education.

“I would expect that as they proceed [with] the reauthorization of this law that there will be more opportunities for, not only me, but our Lehman campus community to voice thoughts,” he said.

The Friends of Van Cortlandt Park Are Working to Keep its Waterways Clean

By Mairin Cahill



The growth of plant matter and algal growth due to high levels of nutrients, called eutrophication, can be seen in the summer months on the surface of Van Cortlandt Lake. Photo courtesy of John Butler.

“You can see it on the water, and smell it. It’s going to be there for a long time, and that is very sad,” said Beni Veras of the oil polluting Tibbetts Brook, one of the few remaining above-ground streams in the city. A steadfast volunteer with the water-quality

testing project at the Van Cortlandt Park for over a year, Veras enjoys the park’s natural splendor while hiking, volunteering, and training with the Van Cortlandt Track Club. He says he is disappointed and troubled by a recent contamination of the brook,

which was first noticed in early February. Veras says it is “a massive oil leakage,” which he suspects someone upstream is discharging into the brook.

Veras is a volunteer with Friends of Van Cortlandt Park (FVCP), which at the beginning of 2015 started a yearlong project of weekly water quality monitoring of Tibbetts Brook and Van Cortlandt Lake. This study has provided insight into the threats facing these bodies of water. Ultimately, these volunteers’ work could result in the resurgence of native species such as the northern two-lined salamander in the park.

Tibbetts Brook runs into Van Cortlandt Lake, a dammed section

“We have the will to do something about this.”

- Beni Veras, member of Friends of Van Cortlandt Park

of the brook. Prior to European settlers, Native Americans inhabited the area and named Tibbetts Brook “Mosholu,” meaning “wide river,” after which Mosholu Parkway is named. According to John Butler, ecological project manager for the FVCP, anglers, boaters, and nature enthusiasts alike enjoy the park’s waterways. In the summer of 2015, community members noticed a telltale green bloom in Van Cortlandt Lake, and brought it to the attention of FVCP, raising concerns about water quality.

This growth on the surface of the water is a sign of eutrophication. According to Butler, this is caused by an overabundance of nutrients in the water, leading to an algae bloom and the death of other animal life due to a lack of oxygen. In the case of Van Cortlandt Lake, the nutrients nitrogen and phosphorus are the culprits. To find the entry points of these compounds, Butler and other experts traced the brook upstream to its origins in backyards in the Redfin Park section of Yonkers. From Redfin Park, Tibbetts Brook flows past Dunwoodie Golf Course, the Saw Mill River Parkway, and Van Cortlandt Park Golf Course.

Golf courses and backyards often



The Friends of Van Cortlandt Park are working alongside government agencies to search for solutions to minimize the negative effects related to the lake’s eutrophication. Photo courtesy of John Butler.

pollute their surroundings. In order to sport vibrant green grass, they are often over-fertilized, and leech runoff, high in nitrogen, into the brook. Roads and general urban runoff, including sewage, can also pollute. “For one stretch in Yonkers,” Butler explains, “the brook runs right next to the Saw Mill Parkway with no buffer in between, meaning that any type of runoff from the road is going right in.” Storm drains also empty into the brook, providing essential drainage, but with the rainwater, “carrying sediment found on the streets and front lawns.”

“We located and identified a pipe that was leaking sewage into the brook,” he said, and notified Yonkers Engineering Department Officials. They “were able to clean it up after they found three illegal connections to the pipe itself, and were able to enforce those connections, as well as fix leaks in the pipe itself.” This should decrease the bacteria count in the brook Butler said, great news for the health of the lake and those who enjoy it. In order to catch damaging materials before they do profound damage to the brook and lake, water sampling on a bi-monthly basis will continue in 2017. This is in light of the “pretty amazing breakthroughs in

2016,” Butler said.

By improving water quality, conservationists hope to see a resurgence in uncommon native species such as the northern two-lined salamander, once seen in the park. Another species that could thrive in a healthy wetland is the American toad. In an effort to “keep the wetlands healthy and continue to harbor a healthy ecosystem,” Lehman students are invited to participate in restoration events, which can be found at the Friends of Van Cortlandt Park website, www.vancortlandt.org.

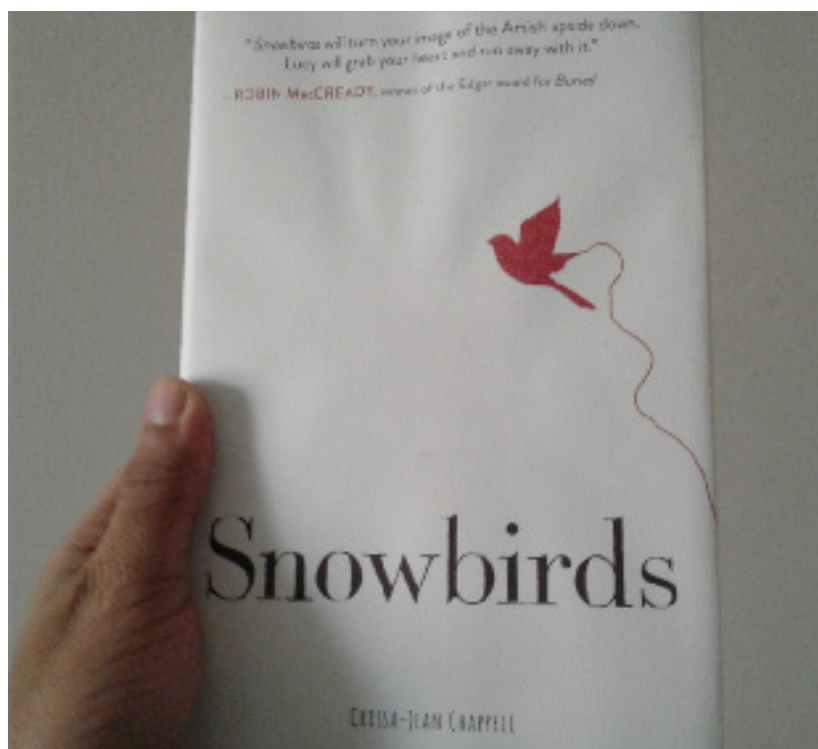
Veras has great faith in volunteers’ and conservationists’ abilities to find and stop the polluting. “We have the will,” he said, “to do something about this.”



The northern two-lined salamander. Photo courtesy of Fordham University Library.

Professor Crissa-Jean Chappell's "Snowbirds" Explores Teen's Journey to Identity

By Abrian De Luna



"Snowbirds" is Crissa-Jean Chappell's latest novel.

Lehman Professor of English, Crissa-Jean Chappell, released a new novel, "Snowbirds," in early January. It follows an Amish girl, Lucy, who is searching for her friend Alice after she goes missing during "Rumspringa," a rite of passage in which Amish children indulge in their forbidden temptations. Chappell, whose books center on coming-of-age experiences, wrote this book around the journey of identity and independent decision-making that teenagers experience growing up, embodied in the protagonist, Lucy.

"Being a teenager means becoming your own person, so that's what drew me to this subject matter," said Chappell. "The catalyst is her friend [Alice], who is missing during

Rumspringa. So, she's forced to leave the comfort of her ordinary world ...to make her own decisions about independence, not being told the rules but to find her own definition of selfhood."

Characters are the drive of Professor Chappell's books. "Before I start working on a book, I always start with character and I look to create a set of circumstances that push or force the character to go into action and out of their comfort zone to explore the world. By facing their fears, that's how they grow and change," she said. She did "a lot" of research into the Amish life, saying that was why it took "years" to write "Snowbirds." For example, she visited Amish communities in Florida and Pennsylvania where she learned a

lot about Amish life, including a few recipes. "When I do research, that's like the number one thing to me, is just be in that world. That's how I discover the world of the characters. I like to actually go there."

Coming-of-age stories were not her initial focus as a writer. "I thought I was going to be writing fantasy or science fiction, but something happened when I went to college. I found that I started to be more interested in the world that I was living in...I guess that was a coming-of-age thing, exploring who you are and your sense of self," said Chappell. When she attended the University of Miami, a creative writing professor, Evelyn Mayerson, told her to "be brave, be bold," pushing her to be "honest and truthful" to her work and to not be afraid of saying the wrong thing. As a teacher, Chappell passes this directive on to her students, along with her belief in the importance of curiosity.

She recalled that she spent her childhood exploring her imagination through both her own thoughts and through books. She said, "Something happens when you grow up. Sometimes you get a teacher who says 'Put that stuff [fantasy books] away!' and I'm like 'No, why would you want to?' I mean, that's a part of who you are. I would hope that as you grow older you don't lose that curiosity about the world and imagination." She herself writes because she is "trying to make sense of the world" and does not wish to lose that.

Lehman Playwrights Take Center Stage

By Leonel Henriquez

The Student Playwrights' Festival took place on Feb. 24 and 25 at the Studio Theater, featuring the works of four Lehman students. "Colored Poetry" directed by Dante Albertie depicts the meeting of two graffiti artists as they argue about aesthetic perspectives while tagging the subways and eluding police. The play by Bronx native Justin Joyce was edgy and funny as the two artists debate the value of their artwork in society. "I have no opinion what I want the audience to take away from the work. I want them to decide what to take away from it," said Justin a 21-year-old junior, who says he was inspired to write the play after watching "The Get Down," the Netflix series on the birth of Hip-Hop in the Bronx, over the 2016 summer break.

Directed by Edgard Toro, "Writer's Block," by Nora Frisch, centers around the life of a writer experiencing difficulty writing a play. The work invites the audience in the world of a heartfelt relationship between a writer, played by Shantelle Watkins, and her lover played by Akua Duodo, who is experiencing her own professional difficulties and battling depression. Nora, a transfer student from SUNY New Paltz, said her work isn't autobiographical "to me or my life. But it is autobiographical to the lives of others that have to deal with artistic or professional issues and how those things may affect their life and relationships."

"Across the Yard," written by Faith D'Erasmus and directed by Stephanie



Playwrights Fe Torres and Nora Frisch. Photo by Leonel Henriquez.

Stowe, is a coming of age love story of two teenagers who live across the courtyard from each other. Anna and Max, played by Bianca Osorio and Donald Salazar, have been lifelong friends who now at age 17 are realizing that they have budding feelings for one another. The two share incredible chemistry as they chase each other about playing cat and mouse while trying not to reveal too much about their feelings. This play is joyfully fun to watch. By the end the audience is almost urging the two together.

The festival ended with the night's best performance given by Martin Keating who stole the show as the

stuttering panhandler in "My-My-My Name Is" by Fé Torres, directed by Stephanie Stowe. The play features a chance encounter between a sarcastic militant-looking type played by Bryan Paredes and a stuttering panhandler on the train. Audience laughter accompanied the banter on stage throughout, as a tutorial takes place between Paredes and the panhandler, who gets a lesson on how to better pitch his lines in order to get more money on the train. What makes this piece so good is that it is so true-to-life to actual events that take place on the train. It is exactly the type of work all New Yorkers who commute on the subway can relate to.

YA Novelist Shares Dynamic Relationship with the Bronx

By Sydney Boryga

On Saturday, Feb. 18, Bronx-bred author Lilliam Rivera launched her YA debut novel, “The Education of Margot Sanchez,” at DreamYard Art Center on Washington Avenue. The event was hosted by feminist hip-hop writer Sofia Quintera, and fellow author Gabby Rivera, along with Noëlle Santos, who is currently pushing to open The Lit. Bar, a bookstore/bar in the Bronx. An air of high energy and excitement filled the room, partly due to the unusual 60-degree weather in mid-February, along with the faint jingle of a Mr. Softee truck from a few blocks away.

Rivera’s novel chronicles the travails of a 15-year-old Puerto Rican girl named Margot, who everyone refers to as “Princesa.” She is forced to spend the summer working at her father’s supermarket in the South Bronx after charging 600 dollars to his credit card to impress her prep school friends. Being one of the only Latina girls, Margot struggles to fit in at her prestigious prep school, straightening her curly hair and listening to Taylor Swift. Along with identity issues, the novel’s themes include dynamic family life, love, and gentrification in the Bronx. Rivera started the evening by reading the first chapter, which swiftly introduced Margot’s identity issues and insecurities with a humorous tone. After the reading, I chatted with her about the novel.

Sydney Boryga: What was your inspiration for your very first novel?

Lilliam Rivera: For me, it was just important to try and capture the magic and beauty of the Bronx in the summertime. It was just magic. Everyone was always outside, there’s always free music and concerts, BBQs, parties...but there was also this intensity. Everyone’s hot and annoyed, but I wanted to capture it all. There’s really so much beauty in the Bronx. The Bronx is thriving, creating, and surviving.

SB: Does Margot hate the Bronx and being from the Bronx?

LR: [Laughs] Margot hates the Bronx--I’m not going to lie. She comes from a family who lives in Riverdale, but she doesn’t consider it the Bronx. She and her family aspire for something else, and to Margot, that means denying her culture in order to survive in her prep school.

SB: I feel like there’s this shared love-hate relationship with the Bronx where you kind of can’t wait to get out, although you love this place, you love your family, your friends, the food. It’s loud and boisterous here, but it’s also like, “Ugh! I hate this place!” There’s a value our lives take on when we get out of these environments.

LR: I went through that phase. The high school I went to was an hour away by train. I could’ve easily went to a high school nearby, but I wanted to get as far away as possible. There was always that sentiment of “I need to get out of the Bronx.” Although now I live in LA, I’m always thinking about the Bronx and writing about the Bronx. My fiction and the voices I write about are coming from this place. I had to rethink about my relationship with the Bronx, and going away helped with that.



The audience at Dreamyard enjoying pizza. Photo credit: Sydney Boryga

SB: What is your writing process? How have you managed a writing career?

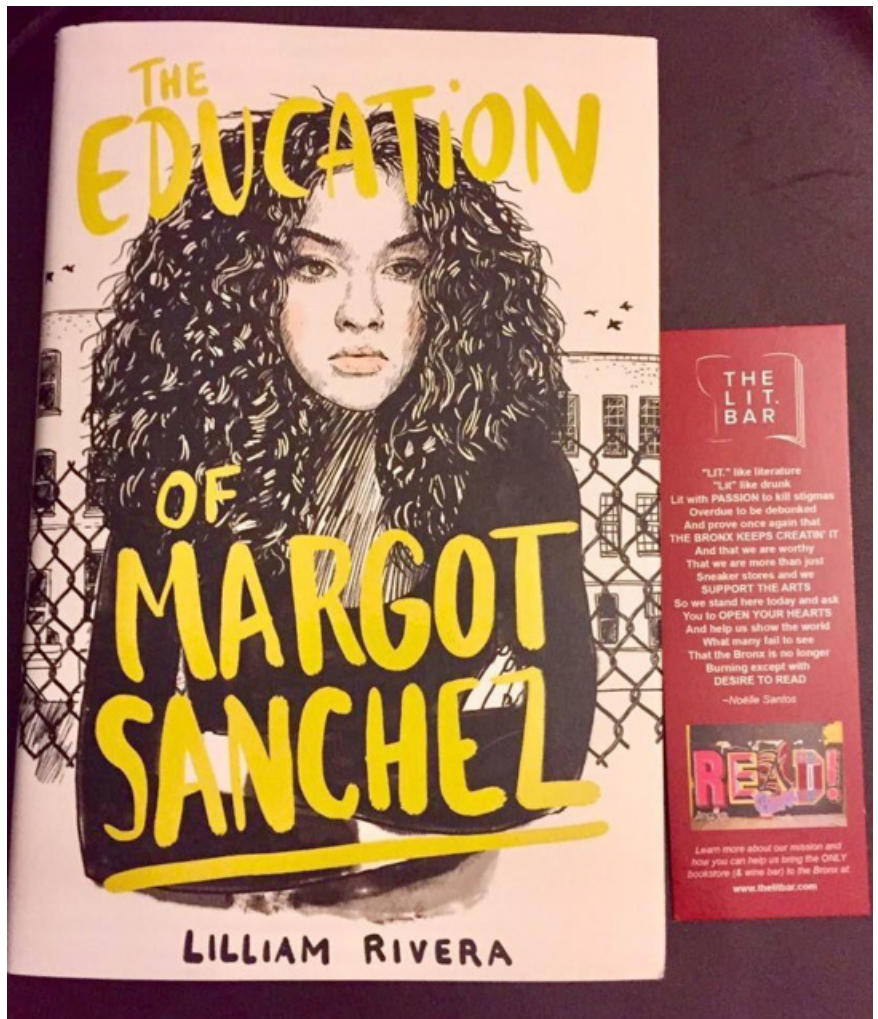
LR: Well, my background is in journalism. I got my first writing gig as an editor at "Latina" magazine. I've always written entertainment features and still do freelance work. I'm excellent with deadlines. I know how to interview people and write things down. I make sure to write at least two hours a day. Sometimes I write in my car. My car becomes my office. Or write at night, after the kids go to sleep. I feel like I don't have time to waste. I have stories to get out there.

"I'm always thinking about the Bronx and writing about the Bronx. My fiction and the voices I write about are coming from this place."

- Lilliam Rivera, author of "The Education of Margot Sanchez"

SB: What is the best part about this book being released?

LR: Hearing feedback from the readers. They say things like "I see myself in this book," and I never imagined that I would write a book, and a young girl from Puerto Rico telling me that she loves my book. To me, it's a big deal. If I can make someone feel that way, it's enough to keep me going.



Author Lilliam Rivera autographed copies of her debut novel. Photo credit: Sydney Boryga

L.I.F.E.SPAN

Saturday, March 25th
@ Lovinger Theater,
Lehman College
3:00pm

G.O.A.T. Music Club &
the Office of Community Engagement
Presents to you

A Benefit Show for Lehman L.I.F.E.

For More Info Contact:
Joshua Reyes (Co-Host) joshua.reyes@lc.cuny.edu
Gabriel Ogbenaya (Co-Host) gabriel.ogbenaya@lc.cuny.edu

Tickets: \$5 Lehman Students/Staff/Guests
@ Door: \$7 Lehman Students/Staff/Guests

Students React to Women's March

By Shivani Boodhoo



Protestors marching in New York City on Jan. 21. Courtesy of Virginia Villalobos.

On Saturday, Jan. 21, the day after Donald Trump became the forty-fifth president of the United States, a set of protests collectively called the Women's March took place around the globe. Half a million protestors marched on Washington---and over 2.5 million across the U.S. as a whole---to remind the world that women are still fighting inequality.

The event was a response to the rhetoric of the past election campaign, which according to the march's official website, "has insulted, demonized, and threatened many of us - immigrants of all statuses, Muslims and those of diverse religious faiths, people who identify as LGBTQIA, Native people, Black and Brown people, people with disabilities, survivors of sexual assault - and our communities are hurting and scared." The protest aimed to address "the question of how to move forward in the face of national and international concern and fear." Many Lehman students found the march inspiring, though some had mixed feelings about the effectiveness of protests.

Virginia Villalobos, a 20-year-old Lehman student studying computer science, happened to come across the Women's March in New York City. She knew about the one in D.C. but on a train ride with her sister discovered a local one happening right here in her home state. "I sat in a train cart full of people holding anti-Trump signs," she recalled. "Once I put two and two together, my sister and I decided to join." For her, the march was a way of "speaking out against the problematic and toxic views of the Trump Administration."

She believes Trump will make safe abortions illegal and close Planned Parenthood. "He'll do a lot," she said, "but nothing good."

Anabel Ventura, a senior and 22-year-old English major, wanted to attend the march but was nervous about large crowds and cops. "You'd think that they were supposed to be protecting people, but some of them

"Our president has made it clear that he completely lacks respect, compassion, and care for women."

- Randol Corneil, 20, a Lehman junior

abuse their power," she said. She understood the march as addressing women's issues such as healthcare, control of their own bodies, LGBTQ and immigration rights and racial equality. "I think that the Women's March is definitely important because it was one of the largest protests in history." Ventura thinks Trump will do nothing for women. "He wants to repress women in an already male-dominated world. We are not our parents or our grandparents. We should be moving

forward."

Randol Corneil, 20, a Lehman junior majoring in computer information systems was not aware of the women's march, but believes that "we are all human and that women and anyone else for that matter deserves equal and level ground on which to stand upon just like anyone else." He echoed Ventura's view of Trump, stating that women will not find equality under his administration and could be pushed back instead. Corneil said, "Our president has made it clear that he completely lacks respect, compassion, and care for women."

Jalina Mason, 19, a sophomore studying psychology, believes like Villalobos that Trump will do a lot of harm to women. "He will try to discredit us. He will try to maim us. He will sacrifice our history to preserve his." She said, "I am a black feminist who supports her sisters no matter what they were assigned at birth, sexuality, social status, etc."

Students did not, however, all see eye to eye on the power of protests to effect change. Ventura and Villalobos feel it is effective. The latter explained, "Because of protesting, every American citizen can vote regardless of race or gender. As long as we stand firm behind our beliefs, we will see this through and create a world in which everyone is equal." Corneil, on the other hand, sounded a note of caution. "Protesting only works to a certain extent when done peacefully," he said, "and with a great showing of unity, organization and defiance of injustice."

Facing Prejudice, Muslim Students Work to Foster Community

By Keidy Gómez

While the U.S. is experiencing social unease driven by leaders advocating hate and a national divide, Muslim students gather to encourage love, understanding, and a sense of community here at Lehman. The Muslim Student Association (MSA) headquartered in the Student Life Building, room 215, is a place where students can pray and share their knowledge and understanding of Islam with non-Muslim members to form a broad coalition among students.

The MSA started in 2008 as a prayer room for Muslim students. It has since been evolving into a community-

building space. “We are the face of Muslims, if people need to talk about Islam they come to us,” said Gabir Kaid, the MSA’s current president and a junior at Lehman. Kaid wants the Club to be not only a place

“The MSA serves as a safety net for Muslims and non-Muslims alike.”

- Nisreen Mahmoud

of prayer but a starting point for members to get involved with issues facing Muslims today. He also wants to promote the club so that students know where they can go for prayer and guidance.

“The MSA serves as a safety net for Muslims and non-Muslims alike,” said Nisreen Mahmoud, a Lehman sophomore. She added that club members are like siblings that interrupt each other but feel safe to speak up---and speak up they do.

Nakissi Dosso, a sophomore, was first introduced to the MSA as a place of prayer. Being someone who likes to get involved, she managed over time to get a couple of Muslim women that weren’t aware of the MSA club to join, and very quickly she also became sister coordinator. She engages women on campus with flyers, events, group chats, and also facilitates a safe space to have “Halaqah,” or Islamic-oriented discussions. “My role is to create a thriving environment for the women, in particular to bond and sustain a sisterhood with Muslim women,” said Dosso. Partly through her efforts, the MSA is becoming a place where students absorb each other’s strengths and help those who just need to be heard.

The group also has two group chats, one on WhatsApp, so they can stay connected to students with busy lives. In addition, the Muslim American Society (MAS) Youth Center, a



We come from different backgrounds and through Islam we are united. Abdulrahman Sanda, Gabir Kaid, Maha Elrowmeim, Fatumata Barrie, Mariama Jalloh, Haman Kaba, Fatima Souane. Photo by Saikou Ceesay.

Brooklyn-based charitable and educational organization with over 50 chapters in the U.S., comes to the MSA to talk with new Muslims and non-Muslims to help them transition and to teach them ways to deal with issues that they are faced with.

“When you get to know who we really are you’ll see that, whoa, he’s not like that. He’s actually a good guy,” said Kaid. He and his family have faced a lot of prejudice for their religion. “They see us as terrorists, something to hate and fear,” he explained. At the MSA, “we are here to talk and to change their perspectives.” The travel ban effected Kaid personally because he’s Yemeni. He and his family attended the first protest of the ban at Kennedy Airport, along with a lawyer friend who reached out to him when she heard about it, and asked how she could assist. The

protest was one example of the broad social solidarity that is emerging from today’s restive political climate, with people of different religions and ethnicities gathering to show mutual support.

Another show of interfaith solidarity among pastors and other community leaders took place with the Yemeni bodega strike. On Feb. 3, over 5,000 people protested against Trump’s immigration ban, which Kaid also participated in. “My friend from the neighborhood said that in 20 years, he didn’t know the store has a gate,” Kaid stated. “He had never seen our store closed and neither had I.”

These actions show that while Muslims are still being targeted, their struggle has produced some gains as people stand together to fight hate. On the legal front, Feb. 9 saw a three-

judge panel reject a reinstatement of the travel ban. MSA members are also keeping up to date with constitutional bylaws, so they can help advise on any situation that may arise once the revised executive order and any others go into effect.

Kaid is also organizing a pre-Ramadan event in anticipation of the holy month of fasting that celebrates the first revelation of the Quran, Islam’s central text, to Muhammad. “When people hear fasting they go ‘ugh.’ They think they are going to starve.” Kaid said. But, he explained, it is much more than that. “Ramadan is a spiritual event that reflects on the world; it’s not just about you individually but as a whole community.” At Lehman, that growth of community is what the MSA is all about.

Allied Professor Initiates LGBTQ+ Club at Lehman

By Angel Mindanao

In the midst of current political turmoil, a new group of dedicated individuals is forming an alliance for students to exchange ideas, feel comfortable, and support the LGBTQ+ community. It has already been active in carrying out one of its main objectives: to address the challenges such as the distorted portrayals of the LGBTQ+ community in the media.

The club is the brainchild of Professor Olivia Moy, director of the English Honors Program, who has been helping to gather and organize a team. She is now the group’s

faculty co-advisor along with English Professor Justin Porter Stephens. “Although she’s just an ally, she still

“We’re all transitioning. It’s good to be in a place where people may intersect.”

- Professor Olivia Moy

felt it was incredibly important for the student body to have,” said Deirdre Fanzo, an English major and the club’s president. “So, she reached out to students, former students, and anyone who responded to the letter she sent out.”

Moy had come up with the idea last semester and had to wait for the spring cycle to establish it. “A lot of students messaged me and wrote about this, but there was no physical outlet,” she said. In February, President Trump rescinded a law that legalized transgender bathrooms.

Seeing a need in the community and the urgency in the turn of political events, Moy spread the word, even to those who had already graduated.

“We have a very robust alumni network,” she said. “They’re very willing to serve as mentors, not only for students who are openly out, but especially for students who may be nervous or struggling.” With the support of President Cruz, the club received over 65 signatures for its creation, even though only ten were needed.

“With the current administration, it’s becoming ever more obvious that our community is being targeted,” said Zoe Fanzo, a sophomore and

the secretary of the club. [Disclosure: Zoe is also print production manager for this paper.] “So, this is a really important place where we can discuss things, and feel comfortable, and know that we’re not alone in this difficult political climate.”

“We would like to first get established,” said Deirdre Fanzo, “then, I want to reach out to the Counseling Center so that they can let students know they have a place to go to.” The club will meet at least once a month. Among their objectives are organizing peer health workshops, group trips to potential protests around New York City, and academic reading sessions. The officers of the LGBTQ+ club

hope to inspire the community by holding events to share coming out stories in the future.

As a literary scholar, Moy believes it is important to build on the intellect of the Lehman student community and share articles and studies that discuss sexuality and gender in different cultures. Club officers and allies have already encouraged students who may have any interesting articles from psychology and sociology courses to send them to a shared Dropbox folder to discuss at future meetings. “Knowledge and scholarship is power,” Moy said. “This is about taking care of ourselves---and taking care of each other.”



The officers of the LGBTQ+ club gather to compose the club guidelines in Moy's office, Carman 392. From left to right: Mariah Dwyer '18, Gabriella Walrath '19, Professor Olivia Moy, Deirdre Fanzo '18, Zoe Fanzo '19.

LEHMAN COLLEGE

LGBTQ+ ALLIANCE KICKOFF MEETING

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 29TH
3:30 - 4:30 PM

EAST DINING ROOM, MUSIC BUILDING

Come and show your support for the LGBTQ+ Alliance! You'll get to know the officers of the club and hear/learn what we have planned for the rest of the school year. Join us for food, drinks, club information, and fun LGBTQ+ movie clips. *Your presence will help to send a message that Lehman is a safe and welcoming community for all.*

Special appearance by President Cruz.

Don't miss it!



LEHMAN LGBTQ+ ALLIANCE

FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE CONTACT US AT:
lgbtq.alliance@lehman.cuny.edu



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Lehman Basketball Season Ends with Letdown

By Ashley Francis

Lehman's men's and women's basketball teams both had very successful 2016 seasons, but couldn't survive the postseason after being eliminated in the first and second round, respectively, in the City University of New York Athletic Conference (CUNYAC).

Though the CUNYAC was established in the 1970s as an NCAA Division III Conference, the Lehman men's basketball team did not qualify for the NCAA until 1994-5. The women's team joined the following season. The CUNYAC now includes ten of the city's senior colleges across the city's five boroughs. In Lehman's history, the men's team has won four championships and the women have won two.

This past season, the women's basketball team won the 2016 CUNYAC Championship after beating Brooklyn College in overtime 73-67 on Feb. 26. They were able to cap the regular season in first place, despite a very tight race with Brooklyn College in the standings. With the 2016-17 regular season coming to an end, the standings were identical to the previous season, with Brooklyn and Lehman battling for the top spot.

As they prepared for a matchup with Staten Island during practice the day before the final championship, it was apparent to their coach what needed to be done for a playoff run. "Consistency. We have to limit turnovers, limit the fouls, play smart,

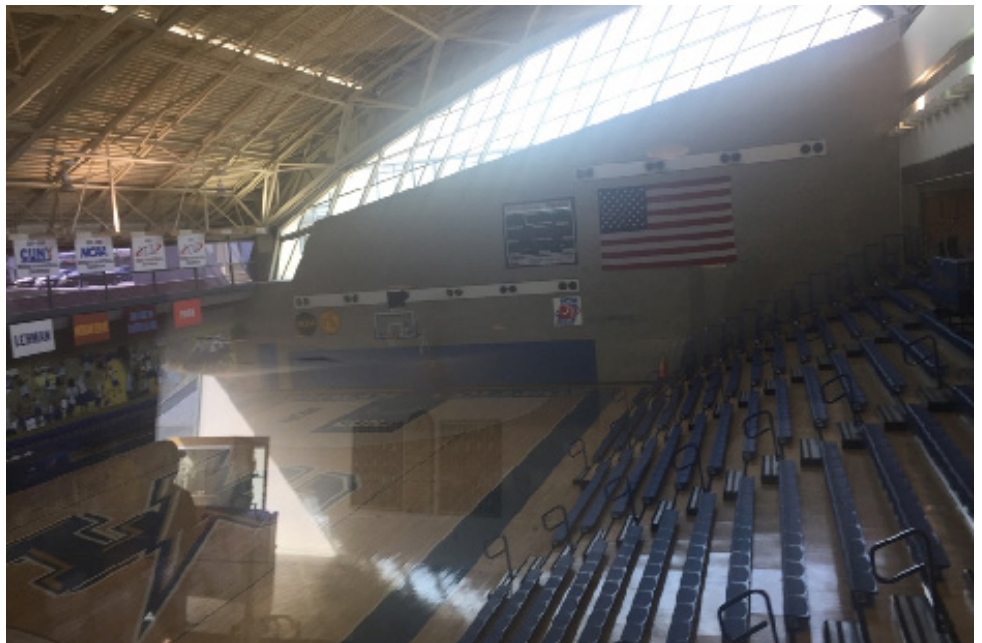
and just be consistent," said Coach Eric Harrison, the winningest women's basketball coach in Lehman's history. There was hope for the Lightning to win back-to-back championships, but on the day of the semifinal matchup they didn't resemble the same team that had won 12 of their 13 games after being crushed 69-43 by Staten Island.

The men's team met a different outcome. A season ago in the CUNYAC Championship semifinals on Feb. 23, they were defeated by Baruch College 80-64. It was a letdown to such a successful season. Baruch was able to pull off the upset as they were only the fifth seed in the conference. Many wondered if the week layoff played a role in the Lehman's loss last season. "The layoff had nothing to do with

it," said head coach Steve Schulman as he reflected on last season.

In this season's semifinals, the Lightning were able to dominate Hunter College 87-60 on Feb. 19 to advance and prepare to play City College. Despite dominating the previous game, three days later Lehman wasn't able to outlast a furious comeback by City College as a last second three won it for the Beavers 73-71.

Despite the women's basketball team still reeling from the abrupt end to their dominant season, they look forward to rebuilding and preparing for next season. Though the Lehman men's basketball team lost in a nail-biter, they hope that the next season will be better.



After a strong season on this court, the men's and women's teams both suffered defeat in the playoffs.